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2 August 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of Legislative Liaison

FROM:

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SUBJECT: Military Situation in Guatemala

1. On 1 August, I briefed Mr. Frederick Barrett and Mr. Edward D. Kennedy of the Government Accounting Office (GAO) at their request on the military situation in Guatemala. The conversation focused specifically on the status of major equipment holdings within the armed forces, and a discussion of Guatemala's major military suppliers since the cutoff of US assistance in 1977. I was accompanied by [] of the Office of Legislative Liaison.

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2. The GAO representatives were cautioned at the outset by [] that much of the information which had been outlined in their written request (copy attached) fell outside the purview of the Intelligence Directorate, and that they might best be addressed by the Defense Department or the Defense Intelligence Agency. Nevertheless, they still sought, and were given, an overview of the military situation. In what was an informal and relaxed atmosphere, I proceeded to explain that the insurgent threat had--in the eyes of senior Guatemalan military officers--become simply a nuisance factor. I indicated that the guerrillas had been reduced from an estimated 3,500-4,000 full-time combatants in 1982 to some 2,000-2,500 at present. I added, however, that the "nuisance" evaluation by the Guatemalans was perhaps an oversimplification, and noted that insurgent operations--following a hiatus prior to the 1 July election--had now resumed.

3. Mssrs. Barrett and Kennedy subsequently focused very heavily on Guatemala's current equipment, its operational status, and aspects of various foreign military sales and deliveries. I advised them that [] by and large, become Guatemala's principal military supplier after 1977, when US support was halted. On several occasions, they sought information on whether

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the CIA had encouraged [] its efforts to aid Guatemala, or whether the Agency had been consulted by the State Department or other federal agencies on [] supplying such equipment. Both [] and myself reminded our guests that such questions could be addressed more directly by other Agency components or the departments of State and Defense.

4. When asked what were the current needs of the Guatemalan military, I responded that the area requiring the most immediate attention would rightly fall on the acquisition of transportation--specifically air-related--assets. Besides an obvious need for spare parts for the Air Force's helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, the Guatemalan military almost certainly would benefit from technical-level training programs and other maintenance-related assistance. In addition, I suggested that assistance that would contribute to the government's civic action programs, such as engineer equipment and technical training, would be welcomed. Medevac helicopters like those recently supplied to El Salvador, training for corpsmen, and other health care assistance would benefit not only the military, but also the civilian population as well.

5. In conclusion, I believe that the briefing went well. Nevertheless, I surmised that at least one of the GAO representatives--though satisfied with the overview provided--felt we (CIA) were "holding out as usual." As a result, they may seek to obtain additional information [] at a later date.

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Attachment:
As stated

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GAO PROPOSAL FOR
BRIEFING BY CIA
REPRESENTATIVES

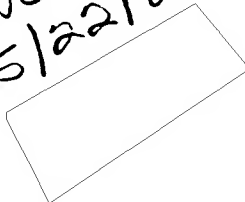
On April 4, 1984, our office received an inquiry from Representative Michael D. Barnes, Chairman, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, House Foreign Affairs Committee. The request focuses on the military supply relationship between the United States and Guatemala despite an arms sales embargo to that country arising from human rights considerations.

In response to this inquiry, we are conducting a survey of this military supply relationship under assignment code 463722. The work includes reviewing such areas as

- the U.S. government's policy with respect to the Guatemala arms sales embargo;
- a detailed analysis of Guatemala's use of the commercial sales system including a case-by-case identification and review of all export license requests for the period 1978 to date; and
- an analysis of Guatemala's use of the security assistance program to obtain equipment, training, and services.

In order to be fully responsive to this inquiry, we require a comprehensive understanding of the military situation in Guatemala including the Central Intelligence Agency's perspective. Presumably, such matters as threat analysis, military capabilities, priorities influencing the U.S. role, Guatemala use of equipment sent by U.S. sources, third country supply sources, etc., should be discussed.

Sent to
Frank D. as requested
on 5/22/84



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